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## **Cultural outsiders' reported adherence to Finnish and French politeness norms**

### **Abstract**

Given the contested notion of culture, intercultural (im)politeness represents an understudied area of research. Yet, (im)politeness research should examine broader social forces. Drawing upon data from five focus group discussions and their dialogical discourse analysis, my study relies on the discursive approach and relational work (Locher and Watts, 2005). My study shows that cultural outsiders reported adhering differently to cultural politeness norms as resources. As such, a reported low tolerance for pragmatic variation in the Finnish and French cultures appears to carry two consequences. First, Finnish and French participants reported changing their adherence to cultural politeness norms in order to follow behavior that better corresponds to the expectations framed by the target culture, and to avoid negatively marked behavior judged as impolite/inappropriate. Second, participants who reported adhering less to the politeness norms of their culture of origin found a better match between their behavior and the dominant politeness norms in the target culture, which carried positive consequences related to constructing their identity. Finally, the close link between relational work and identity construction demonstrated that although participants reported adhering to the politeness norms of the target culture, they emphasized teaching their children the politeness norms of their culture of origin.

**Keywords:** intercultural, (im)politeness, culture, frames of expectations, face

### **1 Introduction**

Despite the frequency of intercultural contacts in a globalized world, surprisingly few studies exist on the area of intercultural (im)politeness (e.g., Mugford, 2018), examining encounters between members of different cultures. Following the emergence of politeness research, most studies were cross-cultural in nature: politeness was examined in intracultural settings, and later compared across cultures (Haugh and Kádár, 2017, p. 601). Subsequently, with the discursive turn of the 2000s, many scholars have remained somewhat reluctant to examine cultural (im)politeness, instead, limiting themselves to smaller communities of practice (Sifianou and Blitvich, 2017, p. 578–579). While culture remains a contested concept, an increasing number of scholars argue that (im)politeness research should look at “broader social forces” (Mills, 2011a, pp. 76–77; Sifianou and Blitvich, 2017, p. 589).

My study aims to respond to the need to increase our understanding of intercultural (im)politeness by examining two under-researched languages and cultures (cf. Sifianou and Blitvich, 2017, p. 580): Finnish and French. I focus on cultural outsiders—that is, French people living in Finland, and Finns living or having lived in France—and reports of their own and their children's politeness behaviors. Thus, my study can be situated within the under-examined areas of learning and teaching politeness norms, understood as broad concepts covering cultural transmission and adaptation (Pizziconi and Locher, 2015, p. 5). This study builds upon my previous research using the same data, which identified opposing dominant politeness norms (together with variation) reported by Finnish and French participants. More specifically, these norms centered around the notion of personal space in Finland, and verbal or nonverbal rapport (e.g., greeting, holding doors) in France (Author, accepted). In the present study, I examine the following: (1) How do Finnish and French participants report adhering to cultural politeness norms? (2) What kinds of attitudes do participants report with regard to their bicultural children's adherence to cultural politeness norms and the teaching of these norms? And, (3) how are the reported adherences shared and negotiated in discussions?

Concentrating on the participants' own understanding of politeness behavior—that is, first order politeness (Watts, 2003, p. 27)—my study lies within the framework of the discursive approach and relational work (Locher and Watts, 2005; Locher, 2006). While the discursive approach rejects stereotypical perceptions of the politeness norms of specific cultural groups (Kádár and Mills, 2013, p. 137), it does not ignore the embeddedness of local norms of communities of practices within larger social and cultural contexts (Locher, 2012, p. 52). Furthermore, the benefit of relational work is that it takes into account the entire spectrum of behavior, “from rude and impolite, via normal, appropriate and unmarked, to marked and polite” (Locher, 2006, p. 250) behaviors. Here, participants' understandings are studied through focus group discussions, a tool seldom applied to (im)politeness research. Yet, such discussions can identify how differences and similarities are shared with regards to normative expectations or “hypothesized norms” (Mills, 2011, p. 75). To analyze the focus group discussions, I used dialogical discourse analysis, taking into consideration interactions between participants, their thoughts and arguments as well as their sociocultural traditions (Marková et al., 2006, pp. 132–134).

The structure of this paper is as follows. In section 2, I discuss the concepts of culture and intercultural, and previous research devoted to such topics. Section 3 presents the theoretical framework—that is, relational work. In section 4, I describe the methodology related to focus group discussions and their analytical processes. Section 5 presents the analysis and results: the reported changes in adherence to cultural politeness norms (5.1), the lack of these reported changes (5.2), and bicultural children's reported adherence to cultural politeness norms (5.3). Finally, I present the implications of this approach (6).

## **2 Culture, intercultural, and (im)politeness research**

The concept of culture remains a debated issue among scholars, particularly in terms of the relationship between culture and the behavior of members of a specific culture. In other words, the question lies in the regularity versus the variability of behaviors (cf. Spencer-Oatey, 2005, pp. 338–339). While some previous studies of cultures (e.g., Hofstede, 1991) have been criticized for assuming a direct link between cultural values and the behavior of members of that culture, reaching conclusions at the other extreme—that is, assuming that language(s) spoken by an individual or the place where they grew up is irrelevant to the analysis of (im)politeness—would be “equally naïve” (Haugh and Kádár 2017, p. 603). I argue that it is crucial that scholars working on intercultural (im)politeness recognize both the importance and the complexity of the concept of culture.

Previous intercultural communication studies have approached culture from three different perspectives: cognitive (culture as a form of knowledge), interactional (culture as recurrent ways of doing and thinking), and critical (culture as an ideological resource supporting power inequalities) (cf. Haugh and Kádár 2017 pp. 606–607). In keeping with Haugh and Kádár (2017, p. 605), what matters in (im)politeness research is that culture offers “*moral grounds*” upon which participants judge the behavior of others as polite or impolite, appropriate or inappropriate, and so on. Yet, members of a culture do not necessarily agree on all evaluations; they are subject to discursive disputes, as emphasized by the discursive approach (see section 3). Thus, previous research (e.g., Mills and Kádár, 2011, pp. 29–31) has shown that regional politeness norms, as well as norms among different social classes or gender, can differ from the wider cultural norms. In other words, although dominant politeness norms—often conservative and powerful—exist, different groups within a culture do not appreciate them similarly, but use them as resources when needed (Mills and Kádár 2011, p. 42). By comparing the narratives of Finns and French people, my study specifically informs the

literature on adherence to shared and dominant cultural politeness norms among a particular social group (educated individuals, see section 4). Yet, a study among a social group within a culture can provide insight into more general tendencies, since no group lives in isolation within a nation (cf. Culpeper 2011, p. 14; Mills, 2011a, p. 76).

In addition to culture, the definition of the concept intercultural is crucial. That is, an analyst must justify why their analysis is intercultural, instead of merely interpersonal (between two or more people). Following Haugh and Kádár (2017, p. 608), I view the analysis of intercultural (im)politeness as focusing on how participants invoke various cultural resources to achieve assessments of (im)politeness. One benefit of my analysis of (im)politeness as intercultural lies in how participants of the focus group discussions identified themselves with different cultural groups (Finns or French people), and explicitly invoked judgments related to different cultural expectations.

To my knowledge, few intercultural, or cross-cultural, (im)politeness studies exist that focus on both French and Finnish participants (Holtinen, 2016: requests; Author, accepted); most studies have examined these languages separately. French politeness has been examined extensively by Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2005a; 2005b), who found that both positive and negative politeness are important among the French (cf. Traverso, 1996, p. 229). In a recent study, Stockinger (2019) focused on the topic of polite behavior among the French. With regards to Finnish politeness, Larjavaara (1999) differentiated between various types of politeness, while Yli-Vakkuri (2005) emphasized the withdrawing nature of Finnish politeness. Yet, these studies lack empirical evidence. The topics of Finnish politeness studies include *kiitos* ('thank you') and the loan word *pliis* ('please') (Peterson and Vaattovaara, 2014), requests (Tanner, 2012), and service encounters, but the study of politeness in the latter is more a consequence than a starting point (e.g., Sorjonen et al., 2009). Cross-cultural (im)politeness studies often focus on speech acts, and contrast for instance French and Australian English (e.g., Béal, 1994: questions and requests; Béal and Traverso, 2010: front door rituals), French and Japanese (Claudel, 2015: apologies and thanks), or Finnish and English (Peterson, 2010: requests). A few recent cross-cultural studies contrasted French with African languages (Soyoye, 2019: French and Yorùbá; Soyoye et al., 2019: West African French and igbo), or with Persian (Moallemi, 2019). Finally, turning to learning and teaching (im)politeness, such topics remain under-examined areas of research (Pizziconi and Locher, 2015, pp. 1–3). Previous studies specifically emphasized awareness-raising activities in (and outside) the classroom in teaching L2 politeness norms and their variability (e.g., Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos, 2003; Bella et al., 2015; Liddicoat and McConachy, 2019), and a few recent studies discussed the teaching of impoliteness (Kecskes, 2019; Petrovic, 2019).

### 3 Theoretical framework

Focusing on first-order politeness—that is, on lay people's own understandings of politeness—my study lies within the framework of the discursive approach and relational work (Locher and Watts, 2005; Locher, 2006; Locher and Watts, 2008). Relational work is defined by Locher and Watts (2005, p. 10) as “‘work’ individuals invest in negotiating relationships with others”. The core idea in relational work is that politeness represents only part of that work. In other words, when participants evaluate their own and others' behavior, these judgments not only include polite or impolite actions, but the entire spectrum of evaluations ranging, for example, from rude and impolite to appropriate and normal. These judgments can be either unmarked or marked. Unmarked behavior goes unnoticed, whereas marked behavior is either negatively or positively evaluated. Locher (2006, p. 256) presents the aspects of the relational work continuum as follows. An *impolite* judgment is

inappropriate/non-politic and, thus, negatively marked. A *non-polite* judgment is appropriate/politic and, thus, unmarked. A *polite* judgment is appropriate/politic and, thus, positively marked. An *over-polite* judgment is inappropriate/non-politic and, thus, negatively marked. This spectrum is relevant to my study, since I take into consideration the entire range of judgments reported by participants when they describe their adherence to cultural politeness norms.

Evaluations of behavior are not created in a vacuum, but are norm-oriented and based on previous experiences in similar types of situations, which Locher and Watts (2008, p. 78) call *frames of expectations* (cf. ‘habitus’, Bourdieu, 1990). The theoretical basis of these frames lies in the “cognitive conceptualizations of forms of appropriate and inappropriate behavior that individuals have constructed through their own histories of social practice”. This does not, however, mean that the frames of expectations remain unchanging and free from variation. A “discursive dispute”—that is, a disagreement about judgments—can occur within any social group (Locher and Watts, 2008, p. 78). This is particularly relevant for the study of intercultural (im)politeness, since frames of expectations may differ more in intercultural interactions than among those between people from the same cultural background. Locher (2006, p. 253) rightly argues that “[t]o strike the appropriate level of relational work is [...] also a matter of experience and acculturation”. Another important concept in relational work is *face* (derived from Goffman, 1967), understood not as a concept related to an individual (cf. Brown and Levinson 1987), but as “constructed discursively with other members of the group in accordance with the line that each individual has chosen” (Locher and Watts, 2005, p. 12). Faces are compared to masks, which are on loan to us, since they are “socially attributed anew in every social interaction and depend crucially on the uptake of the addressees” (Locher 2006 p. 251). We can also hypothesize that cultural outsiders modify their adherence to cultural politeness norms based on the face attributed to them by others. Thus, the study of relational work is also closely connected to identity construction (cf. Locher, 2015b, p. 8).

## 4 Methodology

### 4.1 Data collection and participants

The data in this study consist of focus group discussions. Focus groups differ from other discussion groups in that the participants address questions introduced by the researcher (Marková et al., 2006, p. 33). Researchers should extend the focus of (im)politeness studies from the individual to a more societal level (Haugh, 2010, p. 142). Thus, I argue that the use of focus groups can meet this need and highlight societal understandings. Focus groups have rarely been used in (im)politeness research to date (Garcés-Conejos Blitvich et al., 2010), although one strength lies in their ability to shed light on shared knowledge and normative understandings as well as ambiguities (Bloor et al., 2001, pp. 4–6). Additionally, a second strength is that focus groups are considered cases of “distributed cognition”, where participants think together (Marková et al., 2006, p. 131); no similar data can be obtained through individual interviews or questionnaires. One limitation to focus groups lies in participants’ self-reporting of perceptions and behaviors. More specifically, participants’ reports may not fully correspond to reality.

In this study, participants completed a background information sheet by answering questions about, for instance, their age, profession, and time spent abroad. Table 1 summarizes the primary background characteristics of the participants (n = 22) from the five focus group discussions (total time = 7.3 hours<sup>1</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup>The discussions lasted from 60 to 105 minutes.

	Participants (n)	Gender: F (n) / M (n)	Ages	Professions	Years residing in Finland / France
<b>FG1–France</b>	5	2 / 3	32, 45, 47, 47, 49	curator, researcher, teacher (n = 3)	7, 9, 15, 19, X <sup>2</sup>
<b>FG2–France</b>	5	4 / 1	28, 29, 34, 35, 52	account manager, PhD student, teacher (n = 2), public relations manager	0.6, 2.5, 7, 14, 33
<b>FG3–France</b>	3	2 / 1	26, 51, 55	communications manager, teacher (n = 2)	2.5, 23, 24
<b>FG1– Finland</b>	5	3 / 2	37, 56, 57, 61, 64	director of legal affairs, teacher (n = 4)	5, 7, 10, 11, 18
<b>FG2– Finland</b>	4	4 / 0	23, 23, 26, 31	undergraduate student (n = 4)	0.75, 0.8, 1.5, 3
<b>All groups</b>	22	15 / 7	23–64	teacher (n = 11) undergraduate student (n = 4), others (n = 7)	0.75–33

Table 1. Background characteristics of the focus group participants.

Altogether, there were three French groups (FG1–France, FG2–France, and FG3–France), and two Finnish groups (FG1–Finland and FG2–Finland). French participants (n = 13) living in Finland discussed Finnish politeness, whereas Finnish participants (n = 9) currently or previously residing in France discussed French politeness. The French groups consisted of native French-speaking individuals born in France (see footnote 3). The Finnish groups consisted of native Finnish speakers born in Finland.<sup>3</sup> Each group had three to five participants, thereby providing in-depth insight. The participants ranged in age from 23 to 64 years old, allowing descriptions of different types of reported situations. More women (n = 15) than men (n = 7) participated in the focus group discussions. Participants represented highly educated individuals, thus limiting this study's generalizability to the French or Finnish populations. Half of all participants consisted of teachers (n = 11), primarily French instructors (n = 8). One group, FG2–Finland, consisted of students of French (n = 4) returning from Erasmus exchange programs. French participants had lived in Finland from less than a year to 33 years. In comparison, Finnish participants had lived in France from less than a year to 18 years. All French participants were currently living in Finland. Aside from one participant, Finnish participants had all returned to Finland.

As the moderator, I asked ten open-ended questions related to Finnish or French (im)politeness and allowed participants to determine the direction of their responses (Author, accepted). These questions were:

- (1) What does politeness evoke in you?

<sup>2</sup>One participant of FG1–France was born in Finland, but had lived for extended periods in French-speaking countries.

<sup>3</sup>Exception: one participant of FG1–Finland was born in an eastern European country, but has lived in Finland for 40 years.

- (2) What were your first impressions of Finnish<sup>4</sup> / French<sup>5</sup> politeness?
- (3) What is considered polite in Finland / France?
- (4) What do you appreciate about Finnish / French politeness?
- (5) What causes you problems in terms of Finnish / French politeness?
- (6) What is considered impolite in Finland / France?
- (7) During your stay, have you noticed changes in Finnish / French politeness?
- (8) During your stay, have you noticed changes in your behavior related to politeness?
- (9) If you had one minute to describe Finnish / French politeness to a person who will move to that country, what advice would you give?
- (10) Is there something related to Finnish / French politeness which has not been discussed?

Rather than simply responding to the moderator, participants were instructed to talk with one another. As the moderator, I occupied a quite retracted role; lively multiparty conversations involved unregulated turn-taking. In particular, discussions related to question (8) (changes in politeness behavior) proved especially relevant to the analysis. Yet, the topic was raised by the participants themselves in three groups (FG2–France, FG3–France, FG1–Finland) before I, as the moderator, introduced it. This highlights the relevance of the topic for participants. The discussions were audio- and videotaped in a room at the University of Helsinki library in 2016, and subsequently transcribed. The selected extracts were transcribed in further detail using Praat, a program for the analysis of speech.

#### 4.2 Analytical concepts and processes

In my analysis, I looked for recurrent topics related to reported politeness behavior, where a topic represents something participants talked about at least sequentially. While transcribing discussions in their entirety, I labeled the topics using N/Vivo. I identified three recurrent topics related to adherence to cultural politeness norms: reported changes (5.1), lack of reported changes (5.2.), and bicultural children (5.3).

My analysis relies on dialogical discourse analysis, using analytical tools based on four assumptions (Marková et al., 2006, pp. 59–64). First, focus groups were considered group discussions. Second, the subjects' heterogeneity was taken into account. That is, dialogues took place not only between participants and virtual (absent) participants, but also with oneself (*internal dialogism*, Bakhtin, 1984, p. 184). Third, focus group discussions represented a circulation of ideas. I considered both *addressivity* and *responsivity* (Bakhtin, 1986, pp. 91, 95)—that is, every utterance not only addresses somebody, but also functions as a response to the previous utterance. Fourth, focus groups situate activities by relying on historically and culturally shared social knowledge. As a discursive means, for example, a *collaborative utterance* can be used. In doing so, two or more participants produce one single utterance together (Marková et al., 2006, pp. 180–193). Other discursive means include, for instance, a *categorization*, which occurs when a particular stimulus is deprived of its particularity and placed into a general category. *Examples* function as tests of a speaker's argument (cf. the classification of Wästerfors and Holsanova, 2005). *Specifying and restricting* examples limit arguments to certain circumstances. In turn, *objectivizing* examples aim to make an argument factual—that is, they shift the focus from the speaker to the world beyond. *Questioning* examples, by contrast, cast doubt on the argument of the other speaker by referring to a difficult-to-ignore fact. In addition, participants express stances. Finally, an *affective stance* conveys attitudes and feelings, whereas an *epistemic* stance shows degrees of certainty regarding one's knowledge (Ochs, 1996, p. 410).

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<sup>4</sup>French participants discussed Finnish politeness.

<sup>5</sup>Finnish participants discussed French politeness.

## 5 Analysis and results

### 5.1 Reported changes in adherence to cultural politeness norms

My previous study (Author, accepted) showed that due to different appreciations of space and rapport French people reportedly greeted and held doors open more often, whereas Finns seemingly tolerated silence better. In this study, with the exception of a few participants, French (5.1.1) and Finnish (5.1.2) participants reported changes in their adherence to cultural politeness norms.

#### 5.1.1 French participants

The French participants' reports showed that changes in their politeness behavior became apparent when they visited France. While discussing question (3) (what is considered polite in Finland), participants of FG3–France deviated from the topic. Then, Marguerite began describing Finnish politeness through changes in her own behavior.

(1) FG3–France: Marguerite (MAR) age<sup>6</sup> 51, years<sup>7</sup> 24; Philippe (PHI) age 55, years 23; Rebecca (REB) age 26, years 2.5

(1A)

- 01 MAR        **mais i` doit y avoir**  
              'but it must have'
- 02            **une (.) une influence quand même très nette parce que**  
              'a very strong influence anyway because'
- 03            **à chaque fois que je vais en France/ et:: c'est de mal en pis/**  
              'every time I go to France and it gets from bad to worse'
- 04            **on me dit que je suis EXTRÊMEMENT impolie\**  
              'I'm told that I'm extremely impolite'
- 05 PHI        **oui bien sûr**  
              'yes of course'
- 06 MAR        **donc euh:: je (.) je suppose que la politesse finlandaise**  
              'so uh I I suppose that Finnish politeness'
- 07            **a déteint sur moi de telle sorte/ que je ne:**  
              'has rubbed off on me in a way that I'm not'
- 08            **je n` fais plus part[ie des:: canons français\**  
              'I'm no longer part of French canons'
- 09 PHI                            **[ouais**  
              'yeah'
- 10            (0.4)
- 11 PHI        **ça [c'est sûr**  
              'that's for sure'
- 12 REB        [hm mm
- 13 MAR        **les gens se plaignent\ d[onc (.) clairement en disant que**  
              'people complain so clearly they say that'

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<sup>6</sup>Age of the participant.

<sup>7</sup>Number of years the participant resided in Finland / France.



14 PHI [bien sûr (.) et souvent  
 'of course and often'

15 MAR euh t'es va- (.) t'es VACHEMENT impolie et  
 'uh you're re- you're really impolite and'

16 les gens dans la rue/ font des remarques aussi\  
 'people in the street also make comments'

17 (0.3)

18 PHI [dans la rue quand ils croisent comme ça/]  
 'in the street when they cross like that'

19 MAR [parce que si j` bouscule/]  
 'because if I push'

20 si j` bouscule quelqu'un/ euh j` m'en fiche quoi\  
 'if I push someone I don't care you know'

21 j` vais pas [commencer éh pardon// pardon:\ (.) donc on est: je  
 'I'm not going to start saying sorry sorry so one is I'

22 PHI [ouais  
 'yeah'

23 MAR mais: en France/ c'est c` qu'on fait/ quoi\  
 'but in France that's what one does you know'

Marguerite's narrative illustrates different frames of expectations in Finland and in France related to politeness behavior. She states that Finnish politeness must have strongly influenced her: every time she visits France, her behavior moves from bad to worse. In other words, Marguerite reports that she started to behave according to Finnish frames of expectations. To support her argument, she provides an objectivizing example (line 04), explaining that French people judged her behavior as negatively marked, and attributed a negative face to her: *on me dit que je suis extrêmement impolie* ('I am told that I am extremely impolite'), emphasizing the intensity adverb. Philippe agrees and expresses an epistemic stance indicating a high degree of certainty in line 05: *oui bien sûr* ('yes of course'). Then, Marguerite makes a distinction between Finnish and French politeness. In lines 06–07, she considers the likelihood that Finnish politeness has rubbed off on her—she is no longer a part of French canons. Marguerite's utterance can be interpreted as French people attributing the outsider face to her. Philippe agrees with certainty in line 11: *ça c'est sûr* ('that's for sure'). In line 15, Marguerite gives voice to virtual participants—in this case, French people in France. She assigns their negatively marked judgment of her face by quoting, which attaches an "intensified authenticity" to her explanation (Wästerfors and Holsanova, 2005, p. 533): *t'es vachement impolie* ('you're really impolite'), again emphasizing the intensity adverb. In line 16, Marguerite refers to French people on the street who comment on her behavior. In line 20, she provides a specifying example, describing when she pushes someone and does not care. In line 21, she reports a lack of verbal rapport: *j` vais pas commencer pardon pardon* ('I'm not going to start saying sorry sorry'), uttering the first *pardon* ('sorry') with a highly rising intonation. Finally, Marguerite refers to apologizing as belonging to French frames of expectations in the situation of pushing. A similar frame of expectation in France was reported by Laura (FG1–Finland), who described a change in her behavior after returning to Finland: *pardon koko ajan mä sanoin ja nyt mä oon [...] ihan suomalaistunut taas* ('pardon I

In extract (1B), Philippe shows shared knowledge with Marguerite.

Philippe expresses his agreement with what Marguerite stated earlier about Finnish politeness rubbing off on her. Referring to his own experiences in France, Philippe provides a specifying example, which indicates a need to re-adapt to French frames of expectations related to greeting norms in a store (line 29): *commencer de dire bonjour* ('beginning to say hello'), placing emphasis on *bonjour* ('hello'). Then, he further restricts his example to the need to greet before requesting, uttering that he says directly what he wants, like *ici* ('here'), referring to Finland. In line 32, he quotes his own words in a French store: *j` veux ça j` voudrais ça* ('I want this I would like this'). In subsequent lines, Philippe and Marguerite show shared knowledge through collaborative utterances, and by taking up each other's wording. In line 33, Marguerite completes Philippe's utterance by adding what French store personnel do

when a greeting is missing: *et i` reprennent* ('and they start all over again'). In line 34, Philippe takes up Marguerite's wording and completes it with a quote from virtual participants, in this case, the store personnel in France, which involves a greeting and an address form: *bonjour monsieur* ('hello sir'). In line 35, Marguerite repeats Philippe's quote. Marguerite shows her agreement with Philippe's utterances with multiple *oui* ('yes'). In line 38, Philippe describes his quick re-adaptation to French frames of expectations, which typically occurs within a day or two. Laura's (FG1–France) similar example of the French frame of expectation regarding greeting before requesting which stemmed from the supermarket: *kysyy anteeks missä on jauhot niin sit sanotaan bonjour madame ja sitten meidän jauhomme ovat tuolla* ('you ask excuse me where is the flour then they say bonjour madame and then our flour is there')—*nehän siis korjaa* ('so they correct'). These narratives of French and Finnish participants demonstrate that not greeting before requesting during a service encounter is judged by French people as a marked behavior, which may lead to the re-initiation of an interaction with a greeting.

Changes in greeting behavior were discussed in all of the French focus groups. Pierre (FG2–France, cf. extract 3) mentioned changes relating to both greeting modes and their frequency: *t`as plus l'habitude de faire la bise à tout le monde* ('you no longer have the habit of giving kisses to everybody') (cf. 5.1.2), or *de dire bonjour à tout le monde dans une pièce personnellement* ('or to say hello individually to everyone in a room'). Alice (age 32; 9 years in Finland; FG1–France) reported having learned to attenuate the latter greeting in Finland. In her specifying example from the waiting room of a doctor's office, she made a distinction between French and Finnish habits, illustrating different frames of expectations. According to Alice, in France, one says *Bonjour messieurs dames* ('hello ladies and gentlemen'), whereas in Finland, greeting other waiting people makes them wonder: *si on va faire un discours si on va annoncer que le médecin n'est pas là* ('if one is going to make a speech or announce that the doctor is not there'). Alice concluded: *je rentre en interaction avec eux alors que je n'ai pas à le faire* ('I initiate an interaction without a necessity to do so'). She did not report a judgment from Finns; yet, her greeting behavior was regarded as marked and inappropriate in that situation. An evaluation of over-politeness related to "too extensively" greeting is likely in this type of situation. Locher and Watts (2005, pp. 11–12) suggest that over-politeness is interpreted as an impolite behavior, whereas Culpeper (2008, p. 27–28) defines it as "failed politeness" (instead of impoliteness). Daniel's (FG1–Finland) report confirmed Alice's conclusion regarding the function of greeting and Finnish frames of expectations: *jos sitten täällä tervehdit niin sillon ihminen jotenkin niinku valpastuu ja ajattelee että sulla on jotain asiaa* ('if you greet here then the person somehow becomes alert and thinks that you have something to say to them').

In all of the French focus groups, I found broad consensus on the need to adapt one's politeness behavior (cf. 5.3). Yet, long-term sojourner Philippe (FG3–France) asked a question about the consequences of strong adherence to the dominant norms of the target culture: *jusqu'où on va aller dans la perte de ce que nous on a été* ('how far one will go in the loss of what we've been'). He presents two choices: *si on devient transparent dans nos gestes et dans nos mots ou si on résiste un peu* ('if one becomes transparent in our gestures and in our words or if one resists a little bit'). Philippe's question illustrates the link between relational work and identity construction: extensive changes in politeness behavior can result in losing a part of one's self. Thus, it is possible that not all cultural outsiders wish to fully adhere to the politeness norms of the target culture (see 5.1.3, cf. Moallemi, 2019, p. 226). Yet, a change in behavior can be motivated by avoiding negatively marked behavior, as



Maria describes different frames of expectations related to talking out of turn, and problems caused by her full adoption of a speech culture where talking out of turn is allowed—“the speech culture” (line 03) she refers to here is France. In lines 05–06, Maria distinguishes between different cultural evaluations of talking out of turn: *kohteliaisuuden(h) kiinnostuksen osotus eikä [...] epäkohteliaista* (‘a sign of politeness, interest and not...impolite’). With “politeness” and “interest”, she refers to French evaluations, whereas “impolite” relates to Finnish judgments. In other words, according to her reports, talking out of turn was positively marked behavior in France, but negatively marked behavior in Finland. A similar evaluation was made by Isabella (FG2–Finland) who, while hedging, attributed a negatively marked face to herself when talking out of turn in Finland: *mä olen ehkä siin mieles epäkohteliaampi [...] Suomessa et [...] alko silleen puhumaan päälle ku Ranskassa* (‘I’m perhaps in that sense impolite...in Finland that...I started talking out of turn like in France’). Turning to extract 2 (A), in lines 06–07, Maria repeats her earlier affective stance regarding the difficulty of getting rid of talking out of turn, using an extreme expression *hirveän vaikee* (‘terribly difficult’). In line 12, Maria expresses an epistemic stance of certainty to talking out of turn: *siitä on ihan pakko päästä* (‘one must absolutely get rid of it’). Her justification in line 14 relates to a negative Finnish evaluation: *muuten saa todella kurjan ihmisen maineen* (‘otherwise one gets a reputation of being a very nasty person’). Maria’s reported evaluation involves a negative face (*kurja ihminen*, ‘nasty person’) socially attributed by Finns to a person who talks out of turn. In line 15, Maria connects talking out of turn to interrupting; she utters the verb *keskeyttää* (‘interrupt’) with a marked voice. Laura replies with multiple response particles in line 16—*joo joo joo joo* (‘yeah’ ‘yeah’ ‘yeah’ ‘yeah’)—which increase their intensity (Hakulinen et al., 2004, p. §799).

Earlier, Sofia described changes in her politeness behavior when meeting and separating from others in France: *on vaikea jotenkin olla tekemättä mitään* (‘it’s kind of difficult not to do anything’). She described these as “the most difficult to forget” when visiting Finland. Here, Sofia discusses features of Finnish attitudes to foreign politeness with Maria.

(2B)

- 17 SOF        **joo kyl mä [itse asias huomaa (.) myös (0.2) tarkkailevani**  
                  ‘in fact I do notice that I also observe’
- 18 LAU                **[joo**  
                  ‘yeah’
- 19 SOF        **niit omia tervehdys (0.2) tapojani ja (0.2)**  
                  ‘my own greeting habits and’
- 20                **niinku eron hetkinä mitä tekee koska sit,?**  
                  ‘like what to do in the moments of separation because’
- 21                **(0.3) sä vaan sanoit siitä et niinku ihmiset alkaa**  
                  ‘you said that people start like’
- 22                **ajatella et mikä toi luulee olevansa;**  
                  ‘thinking who does that person think they are’
- 23                **se mu[st Suomessa on myös aika (0.2) vahvasti se et**  
                  ‘that in my opinion is also quite strong in Finland that’
- 24 MAR                **[näinhän (.) hm**  
                  ‘so hm’

- 25 SOF        **jos ne tietää et sä (.) tuut niinku (.) toisesta**  
               ‘if they know that you come from another’
- 26            **(0.3) maasta mut >Suomessa sä oot kuitenkin**  
               ‘country but in Finland you’re nevertheless’
- 27            **suomalainen,?< sä et saa jotenki (0.8) näyttää**  
               ‘a Finn you’re somehow not allowed to show’
- 28            **niitä opittuja(h) (h)tapoja**  
               ‘those acquired habits’
- 29            **S[uomessa et se on tosi (0.3) negatiivinen**  
               ‘in Finland it’s very negative’
- 30 LAU        **[joo:**  
               ‘yeah’
- 31 MAR        **[ei missä- ei missään maassa saa se on uu- se on**  
               ‘you’re not allowed anywhere in no country it’s’
- 32            **universaali piirre,?**  
               ‘a universal feature’

Here, Sofia explains that she notices observing her own greeting habits—that is, moments of separation in Finland—and refers to a negatively marked evaluation reported by Maria earlier in the discussion (lines 21–22): *ihmiset alkaa ajatella et mikä toi luulee olevansa* (‘people start thinking who does that person think they are’). Maria related this evaluation to her habit of not leaving a party in Finland without saying good-bye to everybody (cf. greeting people individually in France, see 5.1.1). She did not use the word “impolite”, but “who does that person think they are”, a judgment indicating one’s wish to stand out from the group, which was negatively evaluated. Thus, this evaluation involved the negative face attributed by Finns to someone who greets “too extensively”, and could also be assessed as over-politeness (cf. 5.1.1). Turning to extract (2B), in line 23, Sofia attempts a categorization using the epistemic stance marker *must* (‘in my opinion’) (Rauniomaa, 2007, pp. 222–223), narrowing its scope of validity. Her categorization relates to cultural identity (lines 26–27): *Suomessa sä oot kuitenkin suomalainen* (‘in Finland you are nevertheless a Finn’). According to her, being a Finn involves not exhibiting acquired habits. Overlapping talk follows. Then, in line 29, Sofia expresses Finns’ negative evaluations and, in line 30, Laura’s *joo*: (‘yeah’) indicates her agreement. Sofia’s utterances show a connection between relational work and identity construction: in order to be considered a Finn, behavior following “Finnish” frames of expectations is required. In lines 31–32, Maria extends the scope of validity of Sofia’s argument to other countries, describing it as a universal feature.

Finnish participants reported keeping some habits, and abandoning others after returning to Finland, depending upon Finns’ evaluations. If a habit in a particular situation was not reported as negatively marked and was not too far from the frames of expectations among Finns, participants did not give it up in Finland. The examples among Finnish participants concerned greeting and politeness phrases in requests. Stella’s (age 26; 3 years in France; FG2–Finland) example related to a bus driver: *mä moikkaan kyllä aina nykyään bussikuskii et se tuli sen Ranskan vaihdon jälkeen* (‘nowadays after the exchange in France I always greet the bus driver’). Anna (age 23; 1.5 years in France; FG2–Finland) explained that this behavior was not completely foreign in Finland: *kyl osa tekee sitä Suomessa* (‘some people do it in Finland’). Furthermore, correcting behavior in the target language reportedly resulted in a

Some acquired greeting forms were reported as negatively marked in the context of Finnish workplaces, and the participants of FG1–Finland abandoned them in Finland. Laura reported abandoning giving kisses: *mä olin bise olin tottunut niin kaikki kollegat pakeni mua omaan työhuoneeseen* (‘I was so used to *bise* that all the colleagues fled from me to their offices’). Daniel had to give up shaking hands: *mä saatoin taas kun mä muutin Suomeen niin kätellä [...] kollegoita mut ei sitä nyt sit voinu* (‘when I returned to Finland I would shake hands...with colleagues but I couldn’t continue doing it’). Although giving kisses or shaking hands were reported as not corresponding to the frames of expectations in the participants’ workplaces, evaluations did not include impolite characterizations. Yet, their inappropriateness was described using other negative affective stances. Laura described her colleagues’ judgment by quoting: *sehän on kammottavaa* (‘it’s horrible’), whereas Daniel provided his own judgment regarding shaking hands: *se tuntui oudolta* (‘it felt weird’). Yet, all of the Finnish participants did not share similar frames of expectations, as shown by Maria’s beliefs and experiences: *nythän Suomessa kaikki bisettelee [...] meillä ainakin* (‘nowadays everybody gives kisses in Finland...at least in our workplace’). Thus, different workplaces can have their own frames of expectations.

Only a few individuals did not report, or hesitated to report, changes in their politeness behavior. When the participants of FG2–France discussed question (4) (appreciations of Finnish politeness), Anne (age 52; 33 years in Finland) expressed a negative affective stance toward French politeness: *quand je retourne en France y a des choses qui me dérangent c'est quand les gens me posent sans cesse tant de questions* ('when I return to France there're things that bother me when people constantly ask me so many questions'). She justified her feelings citing her own change: *moi j'ai dû changé depuis toutes ces années* ('I must have changed during all these years'). Julie felt differently: *moi j'ai toujours été comme ça* ('I've always been like that')—*c'est pour ça que j'ai trouvé mon pays* ('that's why I found my country'). Anne reconsidered changes in her politeness behavior, using an internal dialogism: *peut-être moi aussi je pense aussi* ('perhaps me too I think so too'). During discussions of question (8) (changes in politeness behavior), Julie returned to the topic of not changing.

[ hm

14

03 COL **hm mm//**  
04 **(0.3)**  
05 JUL **mais moi je sais pas/ moi [j'avais l'impre- je je**  
'but I I don't know I got the impre- I I'  
06 PIE **[t'as pas changé/**  
'you haven't changed'  
07 JUL **j'avais [l'impression d'être déjà un peu bizarre/**  
'I got the impression already having been a bit odd'  
08 PIE **[non// (.) ça `a pas//**  
'no it has not'  
09 COL **[((rire))**  
'((laughter))'  
10 JUL **[euh:: d'origine en France/ non mais c'est (.)**  
'uh originally in France no but it's'  
11 **je m- pas très souvent/ j` me sentais mal à l'aise/ j` pensais**  
'I did not f- very often I felt uncomfortable I thought'  
12 **trouver une sorte de (.) même si y a pleins de choses**  
'to find a sort of although there are many things'  
13 **en Finlande qui euh: qui m'embêtent / enfin de:: ze- (.)**  
'in Finland that uh bother me I mean th-'  
14 **ce manque de spontanéité parFOIS/ cette rigidité sur**  
'the lack of spontaneity sometimes this rigidity of'  
15 **certaines CHOSES/ et cetera qui (0.6) mais euh: (0.4)**  
'certain things et cetera that but uh'  
16 **et: et donc euh au niveau d` la politesse de: l'espace**  
'and and so uh at the level of politeness of space'  
17 **na na ni: na na na:/ j'ai l'impression déjà**  
'and so on I get the impression already'  
18 **d'av- déjà/ avoir été comme ça avant/**  
'hav- already having been like that before'  
19 **et donc je sais pas si j'ai vraiment changé/ euh::**  
'and so I don't know if I have really changed uh'  
20 **j` continue à rire fort j` continue ((rire)) voilà quoi y` a c`**  
'I continue to laugh loud I continue ((laughter)) there are'  
21 **sont [des choses comme ça**  
'are things like that'  
22 PIE **[oui ça ça ça (0.2) j` peux j` peux [comprendre en tout cas**  
'yes that that that I can I can understand anyway'  
23 JUL **[((toux))**  
'((cough))'  
24 PIE **parce que moi j'ai eu le même sentiment en arrivant en Finlande**  
'because I had the same feeling when arriving in Finland'



Pierre summarizes their discussion, opining that they have all changed (line 1). In line 5, Julie takes a turn with the first-person singular strong pronoun *mais moi* ('but I'), followed by a hesitation marker *je sais pas* ('I don't know') (Detges and Waltereit, 2014, pp. 31–33, 40). Then, Pierre asks Julie a question with a rising intonation (line 06): *t'as pas changé* ('you haven't changed'). From line 07, Julie utters a questioning example: *j'ai l'impression d'être déjà un peu bizarre [...] d'origine France* ('I got the impression already having been a bit odd...originally in France')—and reports having often felt uncomfortable there. The face that Julie attributes to herself back in France is not a very positive one: *un peu bizarre* ('a little bit odd'). This was due to her long-term adherence to *politesse de l'espace* ('politeness of space') (cf. Author, accepted): *j'ai l'impression déjà [...] avoir été comme ça avant* ('I get the feeling having been like that before') (lines 17–18). This is the second *j'ai l'impression* ('I get the impression') uttered by Julie in this extract, indicating a self-dialogism and, thus, limiting the scope of validity of her utterances. Julie's reflection indicates that her behavior already in France corresponded with Finnish frames of expectations. Therefore, she utters her uncertainty regarding changing (line 19)—which is followed by Pierre's expression of understanding. Following extract (3), Pierre and Anne expressed the same kinds of affective stances. Pierre reported feeling at home after a week in Finland—*je me sens plus à la maison ici qu'en France* ('I feel more at home here than in France')—and Anne's utterance related to her identity: *j'ai eu très vite le sentiment pouvoir être moi-même* ('I had very quickly the feeling to be able to be myself'). These narratives illustrate a link between relational work and identity construction: cultural patterns of behavior were related to feelings of being able to be one's self and feel at home.

Julie's and Anne's narratives showed that some members reported adhering less to the dominant politeness norms of their culture of origin, although these adherences were difficult to describe and involved a self-dialogism. Instead, their appreciations appeared better matched to the frames of expectations and dominant politeness norms of the target culture. Furthermore, this situation could also be reversed—that is, no changes to the politeness norms of the target culture were reported. Max<sup>9</sup> (FG1–Finland) expressed a negative judgment towards French norms, which he called *snobbailu* ('snobbery'). He did not report any changes in himself related to politeness: *mä en siinä mielessä niinku muuttunut lainkaan* ('in that sense I didn't change at all'). Perhaps Max did not want to lose part of his identity by acquiring habits he did not appreciate (cf. 5.1.1).

### 5.3 Bicultural children's reported adherence to cultural politeness norms

Except for one focus group,<sup>10</sup> participants in all of the groups discussed their bicultural children's adherence to cultural politeness norms. French cultural outsiders emphasized the importance of teaching the politeness norms of their culture of origin.<sup>11</sup> Yet, they also described the importance of their own adaptation to Finnish politeness norms. Marc (FG1–France) emphasized the difficulty of the task—*c'est pas si simple* ('it's not that simple')—and justified it with the identity construction of his children: *parce que tout en voulant respecter me plier aux normes finlandaises j'ai envie qu'il y ait chez mes filles une identité française assez forte* ('because although I want to respect and comply with the Finnish norms I wish that my daughters had a quite strong French identity'). Yet, teaching French politeness norms

<sup>9</sup>See footnote 4.

<sup>10</sup>The participants of FG2–Finland did not have children.

<sup>11</sup>Philippe (FG3–France) reported creating their own mixed system with his wife at home, which was too difficult for him to describe; because he lived it daily, he was not necessarily conscious of it.

to children living in Finland was reported as problematic. In extract (4), Bruno talks about his internal conflict related to his own children.

(4) FG1–France: Bruno (BRU) age 45, years 7; Jean (JEA) age 47, years<sup>12</sup>; Marc (MAR) age 49, years 19

(4A)

- 01 BRU        **moi j'ai un peu::**  
              'I've a little bit'  
(three lines omitted)
- 05 BRU        **un conflit interne euh:: par rapport à MES ENFANTS parce que**  
              'an internal conflict uh with respect to my children because'
- 06            **(0.6) ÉVIDEMMENT/ je leur: euh:: (.) apprends**  
              'obviously I uh teach them'
- 07            **des règles de politesse FRANÇAISE/ mais d'un aut` côté/**  
              'French politeness rules but on the other hand'
- 08            **j` veux pas non plus les TRAUMATISER (0.3) étant donné**  
              'I don't want to traumatize them either given'
- 09            **qu'ils habitent ICI\ (0.3) et euh:: ils s` défendent**  
              'that they live here and uh they defend themselves'
- 10            **d'ailleurs: beaucoup hein: euh**  
              'besides a lot uh huh uh'
- 11            **((imite un enfant)) pourquoi on fait ça parce que chez (.)**  
              '((imitates a child)) why do we do this because at'
- 12            **chez les copines/ c'est pas comme ça/ (0.3) et euh**  
              'at friends' houses' it's not like that and uh'
- 13            **donc j` trouve faut: faut quand même trouver un équilibre/**  
              'so I find one needs needs to find a balance anyway'

Here, Bruno describes a problem related to different frames of expectations in his home and in the surrounding Finnish environment. Emphasizing *évidemment* ('obviously') (line 06), Bruno expresses an epistemic stance of a high degree of certainty indicating which norms he teaches to his children: *des règles de politesse française* ('French politeness rules'); he also emphasizes the adjective *française* ('French'). Yet, Bruno expresses a reservation: he does not want to traumatize his children who live *ici* ('here') (in line 09), referring to Finland. Then, Bruno describes his children defending themselves given the conflicting frames of expectations within which they live. As an objectivizing example, he gives voice to virtual participants, in this case, his children, by quoting them (lines 11–12): *pourquoi on fait ça parce que chez les copines c'est pas comme ça* ('why do we do this because at friends' houses it's not like that'). With *j` trouve* ('I find') (line 13), Bruno expresses an opinion discovered through his own experience (Mullan, 2010, p. 223): one needs to find a balance. In extract (4B), Bruno asks for advice, to which Jean replies.

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<sup>12</sup>Jean was born in Finland, but has lived in many French-speaking countries for extended periods of time.

(4B)

- 22 BRU **donc ça peut quand même être utilisé euh:**  
'so it can nevertheless be used uh'
- 23 MAR **hm**
- 24 (0.8)
- 25 BRU **pour établir cette cette GRANDE distance donc euh: (0.7)**  
'to establish this this great distance so uh'
- 26 **donc euh: y` a y` a l` côté supérieur oui/ mais euh:: (0.5)**  
'so uh there is there is this side of superiority yes but uh'
- 27 **euh: i` peut y avoir aussi des des**  
'uh it can also have'
- 28 **aspects à mon avis q[ue: négatifs donc euh (0.3) `fin**  
'aspects that are in my opinion negative so uh finally'
- 29 JEA **[hm**
- 30 BRU **moi j` trouve par rapport à mon (0.9) tsk à mes enfants/**  
'I find with respect to my tsk my children'
- 31 **je m` demande/ euh: bon ils ils habitent pas en France/**  
'I wonder uh well they they don't live in France'
- 32 **sont (0.2) pas (.) purement des Français/ (0.7) donc**  
'are not purely French so'
- 33 **jusqu'où faut-il aller\ (0.4) donc euh**  
'how far does one have to go so uh'
- 34 **[c'est (.) c'est**  
'it's it's'
- 35 JEA **[moi j` pense que (.) il faut il faut (0.4) que (.) les enfants**  
'I think that the children have to have to'
- 36 **soient conscients du fait qu'il y a des différen[ces**  
'be aware of the fact that there are differences'
- 37 BRU **[ouais**  
'yeah'
- 38 JEA **entre cultures et puis que (0.3) certaines choses (.) peuvent**  
'between cultures and then that certain things can'
- 39 **se faire ici/ ne se font pas ailleurs\ (0.4) euh:: (0.4) et m-**  
'be done here and are not done elsewhere uh and'
- 40 **je (.) PRÔNE absolument (0.5) une sorte de: de**  
'I absolutely advocate a sort of'
- 41 **RELativisme euh: culturel là-dessus/ parce que j` veux dire**  
'cultural uh relativism because I mean'
- 42 **la politesse c'est jamais qu'une façon de faire/ (0.2) et**  
'the politeness is never only one way of doing things and'
- 43 **y a pas une meilleure politesse qu'une autre**

‘there isn’t one politeness better than the other’

Bruno refers to French politeness, which can be used to create a great distance. In line 28, he attributes a negatively marked evaluation to it. Furthermore, he expresses a partial agreement with what Marie (age 47; 15 years in Finland) said earlier (line 26): *y’ a l’ côté supérieur oui* (‘there is a side of superiority yes’). Previously, Marie uttered a strong conviction with *je crois vraiment que* (‘I really believe that’): *la politesse fait partie des valeurs culturelles qui sont considérées comme supérieures* (‘politeness is part of the cultural values which are considered superior’). She categorized these values as positively marked—*bonnes positives cultivées éduquées* (‘good positive cultivated educated’)—and expressed a positive affective stance: *c’est mieux que d’être sauvage* (‘it’s better than being wild’). Then, she attempted a categorization of French people, and, by hedging, attributed a colonialist face to them: *c’est un côté peut-être colonialiste chez nous* (‘it’s perhaps the colonialist side in us’). Turning to extract 2 (B), Bruno asks a question concerning his children who live in between two different frames of expectations—that is, they do not live in France and are not purely French (line 33): *jusqu’où faut-il aller* (‘how far does one have to go’). Jean expresses his opinion in line 35: children have to be aware of the differences. Then, Jean distinguishes between different frames of expectations: certain things can be done here—that is, in Finland—and not elsewhere. He expresses his adherence to cultural relativism with a high degree of certainty, whereby one politeness is not better than another. Jean’s perception differs from Marie’s stance regarding the superiority of French politeness norms. Previously, Marie uttered a positively marked evaluation regarding her children’s behavior in France: *en France les filles changent de comportement elles sont beaucoup plus polies* (‘in France the girls change their behavior they are much more polite’). In contrast, Marie attributed a negatively marked judgment related to her children’s behavior back in Finland: *dès qu’on revient en Finlande ça dure une semaine et hop c’est reparti* (‘when we come back to Finland it lasts a week and presto it disappears again’). Marc mentioned the same transformation, but without an evaluation: *on peut vraiment avoir le sentiment qu’ils sont pas les mêmes personnes* (‘one can really have the feeling that they’re not the same people’). Marie’s and Marc’s narratives demonstrate that the children were reportedly attributed different faces when in Finland and in France.

Bicultural children appear competent in adapting their politeness behavior according to the dominant cultural norms. One reason may lie in the response to breaching the frames of expectations, whereby they may not be forgiven as “foreigners”, as reported by Anne (FG2–France): *je suis excusée j’ai une bonne raison [...] si j’étais finlandaise ça ne marcherait pas comme ça* (‘I’m forgiven I’ve a good reason...if I was a Finn it wouldn’t work like that’). Her example appears related to encounters where people know her by name: *c’est pas grave Anne [...] t’es Française* (‘it’s okay Anne...you’re French’). Anne’s report shows that if one is known to be a foreigner, breaching dominant politeness norms may not result in the attribution of a negative face. In contrast, Anne stated that her daughter decided to go to France to study, partly because *elle se sentait différente en tant que Finlandaise* (‘she felt different as a Finn’). Adherence to French politeness norms may have resulted in a more negatively marked behavior and, thus, resulted in a less positive face attribution granted to her. Yet, there is one narrative of a bicultural child’s behavior—a Finnish boy who grew up in France until the age of 11—being positively marked after his return to Finland. Daniel (FG1–Finland) reported that his son’s normal behavior “rises above the average”: *mä en tapaa koskaan ihmistä [...] joka ei kommentoisi sitä miten kaunis käytös hänellä on* (‘everyone I meet...always comments on how beautifully he behaves’). It seems that Daniel’s son succeeded in integrating into his behavior features of French relational work, features

considered polite. His behavior was positively marked by his Finnish interlocutors, rather than viewed as over-politeness, which may have evaluated as a negatively marked behavior. Thus, Daniel's descriptions show that his son was granted a very positive face in Finland.

## **6 Conclusions**

In my study, I examined cultural outsiders' reported adherence to Finnish and French politeness norms. Adopting the discursive approach, I focused on lay people's own understandings, which I studied in focus group discussions where French participants discussed Finnish politeness and Finnish participants discussed French politeness. To analyze the entire spectrum of evaluations among participants, I applied the perspective of relational work (Locher and Watts, 2005), and used dialogical discourse analysis to examine participants' discussions.

Participants reported using different types of adherence to cultural norms as resources. Participants' narratives demonstrated learning that consisted of modifying their behavior according to the frames of expectations of the target culture. Finns living in France reported more verbal- and non-verbal rapport (e.g., frequently greeting and talking out of turn) to others, whereas French people living in Finland reported more respect for the personal space of others (e.g., less greeting and apologizing). The narratives of the participants revealed that changes in their politeness behavior often became apparent to themselves when they visited or returned to their culture of origin. In other words, their reported behavior no longer corresponded to the frames of expectations of their culture of origin. Thus, the narratives of participants indicated negatively marked judgments of their behavior from others ranging from impolite to inappropriate, which they described using strong epistemic and affective stances. As a consequence, participants reported that a negative face was socially attributed to them and, thus, they needed to re-adapt to the politeness norms of their culture of origin. Behaving according to the frames of expectations associated with identity construction—that is, in order to be considered a Finn or a French person, certain behavior was expected. Changing adherence to cultural politeness norms relates to a “degree of tolerance of pragmatic variation” (Murray, 2017, p. 190), which participants reported as low. Murray (2017, p. 191) argues that in societies with a greater cultural diversity many different kinds of behaviors go unmarked. Yet, this remained unreported both in Finland and in France.

Although the narratives of the participants confirmed the existence of shared and wider cultural norms, all participants did not adhere similarly to the politeness norms of their culture of origin. Some participants who adhered less to the politeness of their culture of origin reported having found a better fit between their behavior and the dominant politeness norms in the target culture. This was shown in evaluations related to identity, more specifically to feelings of being able to be oneself in the target culture. The descriptions, however, often involved an internal dialogism indicating uncertainty, which reveals that participants could not easily describe the links between relational work and identity construction. Nevertheless, these results can be associated with appreciations of cultural politeness norms. In Finland, an ongoing discussion is taking place in the media related to impoliteness. Specifically, Finns worry that people from other cultural backgrounds consider Finns impolite, since they greet less than, for example, individuals from central Europe. The positive attitudes of French people living in Finland may come as a surprise to Finns, and could perhaps help Finns learn to appreciate their own politeness norms. Yet, despite their reported adaptation to Finnish politeness, French participants seemed to highly appreciate the politeness norms of their culture of origin, and reported teaching those norms to their bicultural children—their attitudes ranged from the superiority of these norms to cultural relativism. The importance

placed on the reported teaching of the politeness norms of the culture of origin closely relates to the construction of identity as a French person, which the parents studied here hoped to transmit to their children. Although parents faced challenges due to a conflict between the French politeness norms practiced at home and the Finnish politeness norms typical in the surrounding environment, participants reported that their bicultural children behaved according to the frames of expectations of the culture in which they lived.

To conclude, this study shows that the Finnish and French participants reported adhering fairly strongly to the dominant politeness norms of the target culture. To increase the tolerance of different politeness behaviors, greater awareness of pragmatic variations is needed. Although focus groups allowed access to metapragmatic reflections of intercultural (im)politeness, it remains unclear how the reported knowledge corresponds to reality. Therefore, I recorded 12 hours of authentic data from intercultural interactions between Finns and French (Helsinki, Lyon, and Paris). The analysis of such interactions will provide additional information regarding what happens with (im)politeness in actual intercultural interactions.

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## Appendix A: Transcription conventions for French

French speech was transcribed according to the orthographic conventions developed for French language by the ICOR group (ICAR lab, Lyon). For a full version, see [http://icar.univ-lyon2.fr/projets/corinte/documents/2013\\_Conv\\_ICOR\\_250313.pdf](http://icar.univ-lyon2.fr/projets/corinte/documents/2013_Conv_ICOR_250313.pdf).

/\	rising or falling intonation of the preceding segment
//	strongly rising intonation of the preceding segment
.	short pause (less than 0.2 s)
(1.2)	timed pause in seconds and tenths of seconds
[ ]	beginning and end of overlap
BONJOUR	emphasis
:	stretching of prior syllable
((rire))	transcriber's comments
`	non-standard elision

## Appendix B: Transcription conventions for Finnish

Finnish speech was transcribed according to conventions commonly used in conversation analysis.

?	strongly rising pitch at the end of a prosodic unit
,?	slightly rising pitch at the end of a prosodic unit
;	slightly falling pitch at the end of a prosodic unit
<u>todella</u>	prominent stress
>niinku sanoin<	accelerated speech rate
joo:	lengthened vowel
h.joo	clearly audible inhalation
°h.joo°	word produced more quietly than the surrounding speech
£kiinnostuksen£	word produced smilingly
kohteliaisuuden(h)	word produced laughingly
@keskeyttää@	marked voice
[	overlap of speech begins
(.)	micropause (duration of less than 0.2 s)
(0.4)	pause (duration measured in seconds)